

# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

## Scoping, Consultation, and Coordination

BLM served as the lead agency because most of the lands (80 percent) in the 308 square mile PAPA are managed by the agency (hereafter referred to as Federal lands) and the BLM has regulatory responsibility for all Federally-owned minerals in the area (about 83 percent of the PAPA minerals). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), State of Wyoming (including all affected state agencies) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) participated in preparation of the EIS as cooperating agencies.

CEQ regulations require that agencies responsible for preparing an EIS use an early scoping process to identify significant issues. Early and improved scoping, as emphasized by Green River Basin Advisory Committee (GRBAC), was the principal goal of the scoping process which included public participation to identify issues, concerns and potential impacts that require detailed analysis in the EIS. The scoping process was the primary mechanism used by BLM to identify public interests and concerns about proposed development activities in the PAPA.

BLM has actively and directly solicited public involvement by circulating information through mailings, public announcements, and notices in local newspapers and through a series of public workshops. The public has been provided ample opportunity to submit comments and recommendations by mail, over the telephone or fax, e-mail, or in person. The BLM did not only accumulate significant public comment, the agency considered and responded to the concerns expressed. Those concerns lead directly to the development of the scope of this EIS.

On July 9, 1998, BLM mailed a scoping statement to the media, governmental agencies, environmental organizations, industry representatives, individuals, landowners and grazing permittees. A Notice of Intent (NOI) to conduct public scoping and prepare an EIS was published on July 14, 1998 in the *Federal Register*. The scoping statement and NOI explained the general nature of the project and requested initial comments concerning the level of analysis to be included in this document. The formal public scoping comment period ended in August, 1998.

Meetings were held with interested members of the public on July 14, 1998 to discuss issues associated with transportation planning and grazing. The public was invited to attend a tour of the PAPA on July 23, 1998. The tour included stops at a number of important areas in the PAPA including sensitive viewsheds, the Lander Trail, reclaimed well sites, existing

producing well pads, etc. At each of these stops discussions were held with the attending public and concerns noted. On the evening of July 23, 1998 a public hearing was held in Pinedale. Six agency scoping meetings were held, including two meetings designed to allow agency participation in determining the geographic extent of the cumulative impact analysis for each resource. A meeting was held with environmental groups on June 18, 1999 to discuss the revised mitigation alternatives and levels of development.

Public involvement was also solicited at a series of workshops held in Pinedale during the week of December 7, 1998 and again on August 5, 1999. At these workshops the public was presented with descriptions of the various scenarios for continued exploration and development of the gas resource and the tools which would be used by BLM to assess and quantify the impacts associated with the alternatives (i.e., visual simulations, models to predict degradation of habitat suitability, etc.). Preliminary descriptions of the alternatives were provided at the December workshops and the public identified additional concerns. During the August open house/workshop, additional refinement of the mitigation alternatives was described to the public. Approximately 90 members of the public attended the workshops in December, 1998 and about 24 attended the August, 1999 open house/workshop. A transportation planning workshop was also held in August during which approximately 27 people attended. The meeting was attended by general public, livestock operators, cooperating agencies, landowners, county and local government entities, and oil/gas operators to identify access into and within the Pinedale Anticline Field.

All comments received were incorporated into the analysis of issues found in this EIS. Over 100 comment letters were received during the scoping process. Issues raised by the public are summarized in the DEIS impact analysis discussion for each resource in Chapter 4.

The DEIS was mailed-out to the public on November 19, 1999 and a Notice of Availability (NOA) was published in the *Federal Register* on November 26, 1999. The comment period ended on February 4, 2000, including approval of a 10-day extension of time requested by several environmental organizations. Approximately 500 copies of the DEIS were distributed. Comments were received from a number of groups including the general public, operators, grazing permittees, environmental groups, industry groups, and a number of Federal agencies. A total of 235 comment letters were received. BLM responses to each comment letter are included at the end of Section 5 of the FEIS.

During the DEIS comment period, the Wyoming Wildlife Federation, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, Sierra Club, and Wyoming Outdoor Council distributed notices/alerts to their membership and asked for comments on the DEIS. Because letters and e-mails from members of these groups contained essentially the same comments, BLM did not reprint individual letters and e-mails in the FEIS. Rather, BLM responded to the comments contained in the notices/alerts in Section 6 of the FEIS.

In addition to written comments, BLM held a public hearing in Pinedale on January 12, 2000. A total of 86 people signed in at the hearing – 17 gave statements. Many local residents spoke at that hearing. A transcript of the hearing is provided in Section 7 of the FEIS.

The FEIS was issued to the public on May 26, 2000 and a NOA was published in the *Federal Register* on June 2, 2000. Comments received on the DEIS are contained in Section 5 of the FEIS along with responses to all substantive comments. Approximately 500 copies of the FEIS were mailed out. The comment period on the FEIS ended July 5, 2000. A

total of 16 comment letters were received. Letters were received from the following:

- Bjork, Lindley, Danielson & Baker, P.C. for HS Resources
- Questar Market Resources Group
- Mountain Gas Resources Inc.
- Anschutz Wyoming Corporation
- Yates Petroleum Corp.
- Ultra Petroleum
- BP Amoco
- McMurry Energy Co.
- Wyoming Wildlife Federation
- Wyoming Outdoor Council
- Linda F. Baker
- Wildlife Management Institute
- Greater Yellowstone Coalition
- Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance
- Barry Johnson
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

A copy of the comment letters received and BLM's response to the comments is found in Appendix G of this ROD.

## APPEAL PROCESS

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR 3165.4(c). If an appeal is filed, your notice of appeal must be filed in this office (Bureau of Land Management, State Director, P.O. Box 1828, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82003) within 30 days of the date BLM publishes their notice of the decision in the *Federal Register*. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition (pursuant to 43 CFR 3165.4(c)) for a stay (suspension) of the effectiveness of this decision

during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed in 43 CFR 3165.4(c). Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the appropriate office of the Solicitor at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.